

Id Briefs

S. Beirut embassy hit by rockets

APRIL 2 (Agencies) — The U.S. embassy in Beirut was hit by two armour-piercing rockets today, but nobody was hurt, an embassy spokesman said. The spokesman said the rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) slammed into the first and fifth floors of the building on the seafront. Two rooms were badly damaged, but there was nobody in them at the time. The spokesman said the embassy had received no advance warning of the attack, and nobody had claimed responsibility. Lebanese troops left the building within minutes of the attack, but there were no other incidents and the spokesman said the embassy would be in for business as usual tomorrow. Later, a group calling itself the Organisation of Arab People said it was responsible for the attack. An anonymous caller read a statement to the newspapers which he said the group, unknown before now, "would hit more than United States interests, agents and all traitors."

Issue 4, Number 1022

AMMAN, TUESDAY APRIL 3, 1979 — JAMADI AL AWAL 5, 1399

Syria warns: supporting treaty affects relations with Arab World

USC, April 2 (R) — Syria today that support for the un-Israeli peace treaty by would adversely affect its ties with the Arab World. warning was conveyed to ds of diplomatic missions. They were called in to the ministry here to be told of ision to impose sanctions by an Arab foreign and its ministers' conference in d, official sources said.

state-run Damascus Radio also attacked the visit to y Israeli Prime Minister Begin while demon in two Syrian cities in protest against the tre

Arab masses will never be treason of the head of tian regime in signing the humiliation and will pun the radio said.

poli, a senior Libyan offi today the Libyan arah will support oppos President Sadat "by all but does not plan an oil against states backing the n-Israeli separate peace

official, who declined to be told Reuters that his coun cut all links with Egypt, closing borders and canvering rights.

it was giving only moral to anti-Sadat forces inside

Syria warns:

upholding treaty affects relations with Arab World

Egypt, but "if material support is asked for we will not hesitate to give it," the official said.

The Tripoli government did not consider this to be interference in Egypt's internal affairs as "the Arab revolution is one movement, which must be supported wherever it shows its existence."

The official said his government did not plan a unilateral oil boycott against the United States or other countries which had welcomed the bilateral Israeli

Troops, Turkoman tribes battle despite ceasefire

GONBAD KAVUS, Iran, April 2 (R) — Hundreds of Iranian troops dug in around this key town near the Soviet border tonight as pro-government militiamen battled with Turkoman tribesmen despite an announced ceasefire.

Heavy automatic rifle-fire and the steady pounding of grenade launchers could be heard at 6 p.m. (1430 GMT) — two hours after Iran Radio announced that the two sides had stopped fighting.

At least eight army Scorpion tanks and many armoured per

Egyptian treaty. But if Arab oil exporters decided on a boycott, then the Jamahiriya would join them.

The Liyan Jamahiriya believed the peace treaty would last only as long as President Sadat, the official said, and he predicted that the Egyptian leader would be overthrown before the end of this year.

"Then Israel and Egypt will use the U.S. weapons against each other," he said.

AMMAN, April 2 (T.T.) — Jordan's Ambassador to Cairo, Mr. Zouqan Al Hindawi, returned here Saturday following a government decision implementing the resolutions of the Baghdad Arab foreign and economy ministers' conference. In a press statement at Amman airport, Mr. Hindawi said: "It is a tragedy that Cairo should reject 20 Arab ambassadors, while at the same time roll out the red carpet to receive the Israeli Prime Minister who masterminded the massacres of Deik Yassin and the school of Bahr Al Bagar in Egypt." It is clear, the Ambassador added, that since a long time ago, the Egyptian president "embarked on attempts to break away from the Arabs, and cooperate with Israel." His Majesty King Hussein has exerted continued efforts to dissuade Sadat from pressing forward with his plans, and "instead of complying, the Egyptian president arrogantly signed the treaty of shame and capitulation with the enemy," the ambassador added. Mr. Hindawi further expressed his conviction that "Sadat's attempts to uproot Egypt and alienate it from its destiny, and history are doomed to fail." The policy of the Egyptian president compelled the Arab foreign ministers to adopt sanctions against Egypt. We sincerely hope that these sanctions will pave the road for the return of Egypt to the Arab fold," the ambassador said. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs today summoned the Egyptian chargé d'affaires in Amman and informed him of the Jordanian government's decision to sever all political and diplomatic ties with Egypt as of yesterday. The Jordanian government's decision was announced at the end of a five and a half hour cabinet meeting yesterday during which the cabinet reviewed the recommendations and resolutions passed at the Baghdad Conference.

son carriers moved into position around this small north-eastern market town, their guns pointed towards its ancient funeral tower in the heart of the Turkoman area. Local militia chief

and senior military personnel were at the airport as he was welcomed by Vice-President Hosni Mubarak and heard the Israeli national anthem played for the first time on Egyptian soil. President Anwar Sadat was not on board but protocol did not require his presence.

Another notable absentee from the ceremony was Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil, who was officially reported to be engaged in "other important business". But he himself said he was unwell.

Also absent were Arab ambassadors, most of whom had left Egypt by today in response to an Arab boycott of Egypt.

However, Mr. Begin looked happy during visits to the Pyramids, to Cairo's main synagogue for prayer and to the tomb of Egypt's unknown soldier to lay a wreath.

At the airport to greet Mr.

Begin was Mr. Felix Ishaki, leader of the small 500-strong Jewish community in Egypt.

The Israeli flag, the Star of David, was hoisted at the airport only shortly before Mr. Begin's arrival and there were no flags along the route.

All approaches to the airport and along the route to the Tahira Palace outside Cairo where Mr. Begin will be staying during his 28-hour visit were closed to normal traffic and heavily guarded.

Mr. Begin was whisked to the palace in a closed black limousine surrounded by motorcycle outriders. The motorcade touched 100 kilometres an hour as it sped away.

Dr. Khalil, contacted later at his home about his airport absence, said: "I am not feeling well. I am testing at home for three days. I've been at home since yesterday."

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Selected schools to double as rec. centres

By Breda Finegan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, April 2—Starting June 1, Jordanian children are going to be seeing a lot more of their schools than they used to. Following a decision by the Ministry of Education, selected schools throughout the country will be reopening their doors during the afternoon for children to use as recreational centres.

Dr. Izzat Jaradat, the secretary of the Jordan National Committee for International Year of the Child (JNC/ICY), told the Jordan Times today that the schools will provide supervised activities for children who are roughly between six and 12 years of age although 12 should not be regarded as a compulsory age limit.

The director of the Karak district has already recommended that 27 schools be used as recreational centres for the Karak Governorate.

Afternoon activities at the schools will include sports, art, reading and games, and teachers will be paid overtime to supervise the children.

Dr. Jaradat stressed that it would not be organised as rigidly as morning classes and that often the teacher would do little more than help a child who asked to do so, organise games and generally see that the children are using the time constructively.

The Ministry of Education will be issuing guidelines to the teachers for the conduct of the afternoon sessions but these need not be used if the teachers are imaginative.

The JNC/ICY will provide the schools chosen as recreational centres with playground equipment and extra books, games and art materials, so that the schools need only provide the premises and the staff.

The recreational centres will probably be open to children between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m.

Although opening of schools for children in the afternoon is part of the Ministry of Education's contribution to International Year of the Child, Dr. Jaradat said this measure would be adopted as a permanent policy of the ministry.

The director of education in each district in Jordan has already been asked to assess the number

National News Roundup...

Multiservice financial co. to be set up in 3 months

AMMAN, April 2 (J.T.)—The subject of establishing a Jordanian firm to deal with securities and other financial instruments was discussed at a meeting held in the Central Bank here today. The planning for the new company was initiated by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which has undertaken the creation of similar companies in 52 countries. The company is to offer a wide spectrum of financial services, especially to the private sector. Taking part in the meeting were representatives of Jordanian banks, credit corporations, insurance companies and money changers. They elected a constituent assembly comprising representatives of these organisations to pursue necessary steps for the establishment of the company in three months.

Regulations for labourers set up

AMMAN, April 2 (J.T.)—The employment of Jordanian labourers in Arab states and the employment of Arab and foreign labourers in Jordan was the topic for discussion at a meeting held at the Ministry of Labour's employment department here today. At the meeting chaired by Minister of Labour Issam Ajlouni it was agreed that the Jordanian government will coordinate with Arab embassies here on issuing of visas to Jordanians wishing to work in Arab countries. This will be similar to coordination procedures already in force between Jordan on the one hand and Libya and Saudi Arabia on the other. All Jordanian labourers will be prevented from leaving the country unless their passports bear a statement from the employment department giving them permission to travel, department head Mansour I'toud said after the meeting. The department will appoint inspectors to make sure that the employment of foreigners in Jordan is carried out through proper legal channels, he added.

Industrial Development Bank makes two loans

AMMAN, April 2 (J.N.A.)—The board of the Industrial Development Bank has agreed to give two loans worth JD 315,000; the first for expanding a matchbox plant and the second for setting up a plant to provide school scrap books, both of which projects are expected to realise an annual income of JD 33,200.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Book Exhibit

The Goethe Institute presents an exhibition of children's books, in German and English, at the Preparatory Boys' School No. 1 at Zarqa Camp. The exhibit is in commemoration of the International Year of the Child.

Children's Films

The Goethe Institute is showing a film for children at Zarqa Camp. It is entitled "The Flying Classroom" (in German with Arabic subtitles), and starts at 3:30 p.m.

Documentary Films

The French Cultural Centre presents two documentaries on life in the oceans, starting at 5:30 p.m. The first is "Le vol du pingouin" and the second is "La plonge en grande profondeur."

BRITISH LADIES OF AMMAN

are having a demonstration of
TAE KWON DO
(Korean art of self-defence)

on Wednesday, 4th April, 10:00 a.m. at the British Embassy Club. Toddlers not allowed. School children welcome.

Coffee morning—Wednesday, 18th April, same time, same place. Toddlers and babies very welcome.

Jordan helped heal Arab split in Baghdad, Badran tells NCC

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, April 2—Jordan moved quickly to heal differences which arose during the recent Arab foreign and economic ministers meeting in Baghdad and was instrumental in deciding sanctions against Egypt for signing a separate peace treaty with Israel.

Washington's answers were "broadly indicative that attempts were being made to single out Egypt for a separate agreement with Israel," he said.

The prime minister, who noted during his speech that "Jordan today finds itself at the centre of Arab resistance" to machinations against the Arab nation, said in reply to a question by a council member that disturbances at the University of Jordan over the last three days had been caused by saboteurs in the pay of Zionists.

Over the past few months, Mr. Badran said, the Carter administration made several contacts with Jordan and dispatched several American officials to Amman in an attempt to sound out the Jordanian position and... if possible lure Jordan into joining the negotiations, the prime minister said.

He added that the last of these officials was U.S. presidential adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski who came after the announcement by the American president that Israel and Egypt had reached agreement to sign the separate peace treaty. His Majesty King Hussein reiterated to Mr. Brzezinski Jordan's firm position towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, meaning the participation of all parties concerned in the talks, and that peace should be based on full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands, including Arab Jerusalem, the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their rights to determine their own future on its home land, Mr. Badran said.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency (JNA), the minister of education said that Prince Hassan was accorded a warm welcome in Indonesia, a country which sympathises with us and supports our positions. What gratified us was people's adherence to Islam, and their interest to learn Arabic, the Minister added.

This visit, which opens possibilities of cooperation with brotherly nations, makes us aware of the size of the responsibility which we have to shoulder in supporting education, particularly of Arabic and Islamic studies in Indonesia and Malaysia.

The prime minister said the Jordan University students had organised peaceful rallies to express their opposition to the Egyptian-Israeli treaty and to voice their support for the government and the policy of His Majesty King Hussein with regard to the separate peace treaty, but subversive elements and agents hired by the Zionists had infiltrated the ranks of loyal youths and tried to disrupt their noble march and divert it into dangerous regional factionalism working against the interests of the Arab nation.

During his stay in Baghdad, Dr. Dajani held economic and trade talks with Iraqi government officials and signed trade protocols between Jordan and Iraq.

The Iraqi government has decided to increase its imports of Jordanian products by JD 4 million annually through the Jordanian commercial centre in Baghdad, Dr. Dajani said.

He said representatives of Iraqi trade and economic organisations will shortly visit Jordan to discuss ways of further increasing the volume of trade exchanged between the two countries, and, as a result, there are about 10,000 Egyptian workers in Jordan.

He made his statement only one day after Arab foreign and economic ministers decided at their summit meeting in Baghdad to impose sanctions against Egypt for signing a peace treaty with Israel.

private sector for use in quarries, roads and other projects, Mr. Badran said. He pointed out that the government will purchase the available quantities of explosive materials and will not confiscate them.

Also speaking at today's session was Minister of Transport Ali Subeimat, who gave details of the crash of the Alital Boeing in Qatar on March 13.

He said a multinational committee was formed to investigate the crash at the request of the Qatari government.

He said the committee's findings revealed that the crash was due to a violent storm which aircraft was exposed to at a altitude of 500 feet as it was approaching its landing strip number 34 at Doha's international airport.

He said the report revealed that the radar system at the airport was not operative at the time and the control tower could not give details about the weather based on radar detection. Instructions given to the pilot by the control tower were based on vision and not on the radar system. Mr. Subeimat said.

Iraq to import additional JD 4m. annually from Jordan

AMMAN, April 2 (J.N.A.)—The main resolutions passed at the meeting of Arab economic ministers that ended in Baghdad on Saturday were a total halt of Arab aid to Egypt and suspension of Egypt's membership in various Arab economic and trade activities, Minister of Industry and Commerce Dr. Nijeddin Dajani said today on his return here from the conference.

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AMMAN, April 2 (R)—Interior Minister Suleiman Arar said yesterday the government's treatment of Egyptians working in Amman would remain unchanged. He said nothing would be changed concerning residence and employment facilities.

The weather will continue to be warm, dry and dusty at times, with southwesterly moderate winds. In Aqaba it will be dusty with southwesterly moderate winds and rough seas.

Overnight Daytime

Amman 17 34

Aqaba 24 38

Deserts 20 37

Jordan Valley 22 38

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REQUIRED

English speaking embassy requires the services of a Typist in English and Arabic. Starting salary between JD. 130 - 160, depending on qualifications.

Call 43246/7 between 8 - 12 for appointment.

The new management of AMMAN GRAND HOTEL

Restaurant, pub, summer garden, car park, welcome you and invites you to stay with us, and try our cuisine and cocktails.

Amman, Ibn Sina Street, Jdeid Amman, Tel. 94528 - Telex 1267, C/O Ahmad Hamed. P.O. Box 2338.

DELUXE APARTMENT FOR RENT

A deluxe apartment consisting of three bedrooms, living room, dining room, salon, big kitchen, well wardrobes, two bathrooms, central heating and private telephone is for rent.

Location: Shmeisani, near Babiche Patisserie.

Call Tel. 37260

NOTICE TO ALL U.S. TAXPAYERS

Ms. CINDY HILL, U.S. Taxpayer Assistor, will visit Amman from April 3 to April 7 in order to aid U.S. Citizens with Tax problems and answer questions concerning taxation. Ms. Hill will be available in the consulate to answer special questions on a first come, first served basis, from 1000 to 1600 on April 4, from 1100 to 1600 on April 5, and in the commercial office downtown from 0900 to 1300 on April 7.

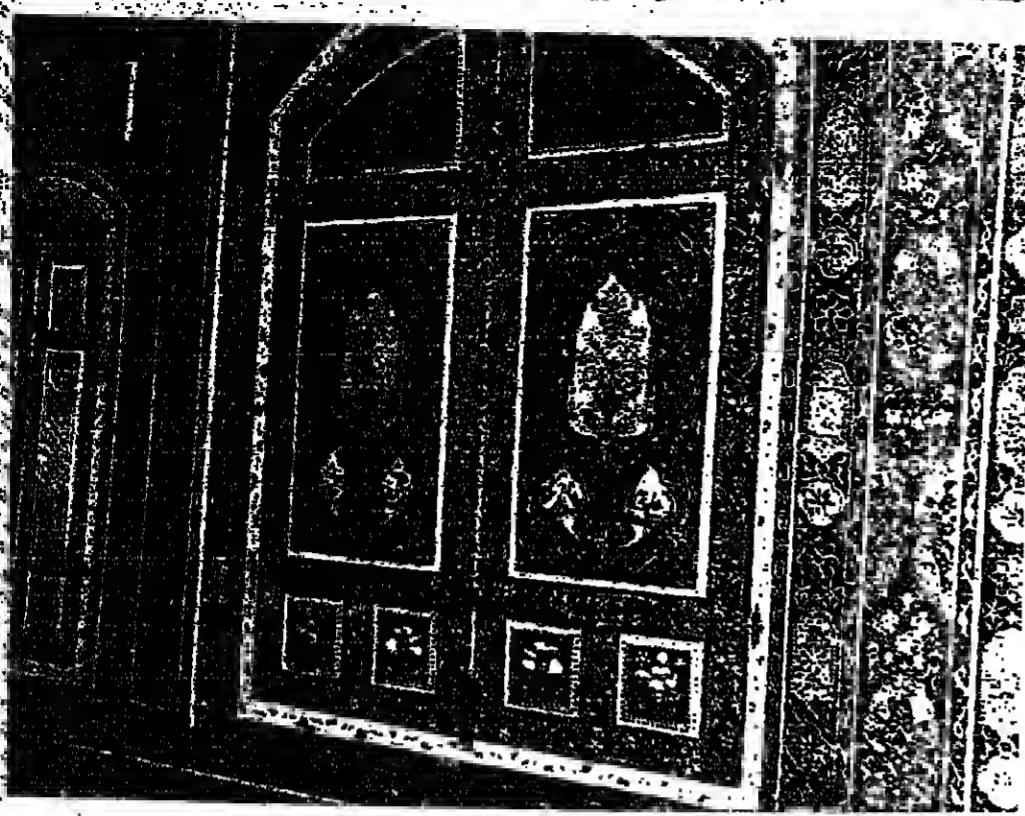
DODGE VAN FOR SALE

1977 model, automatic, eight cylinders, power steering, power breaks, good condition, customs not paid.

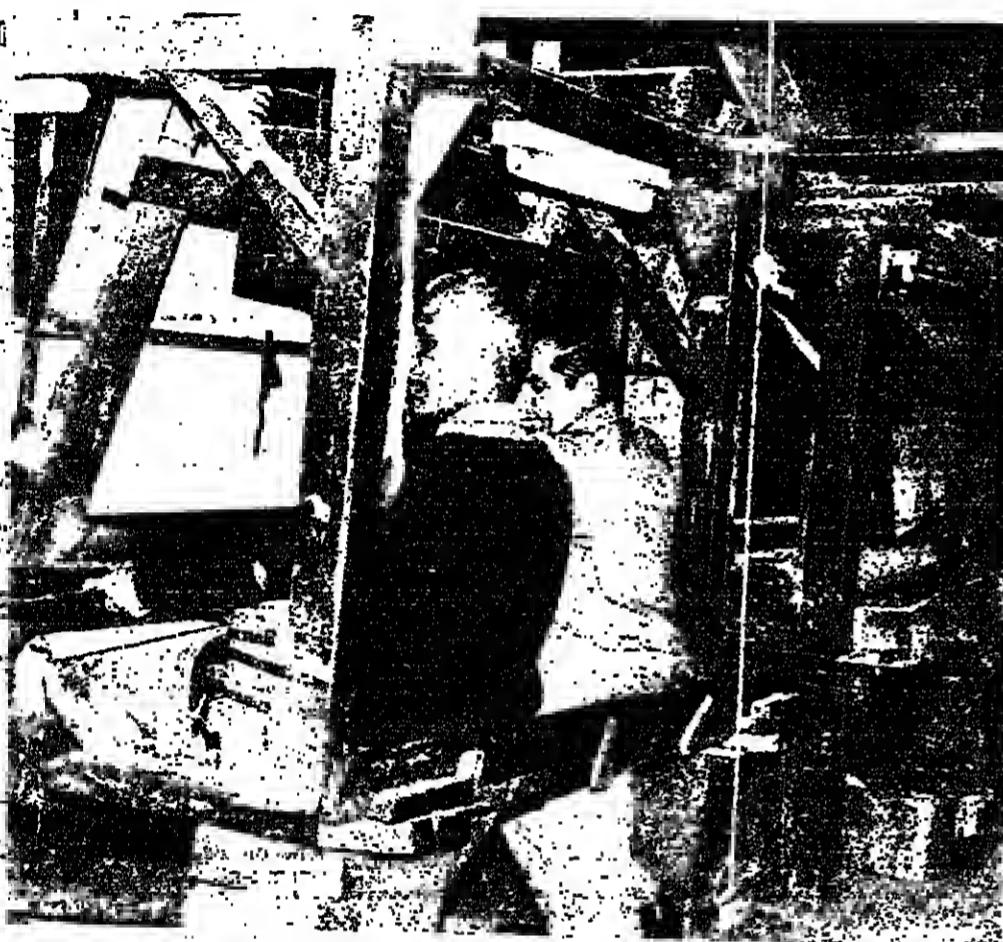
Please contact Tel. 78888.

JORDAN TIMES

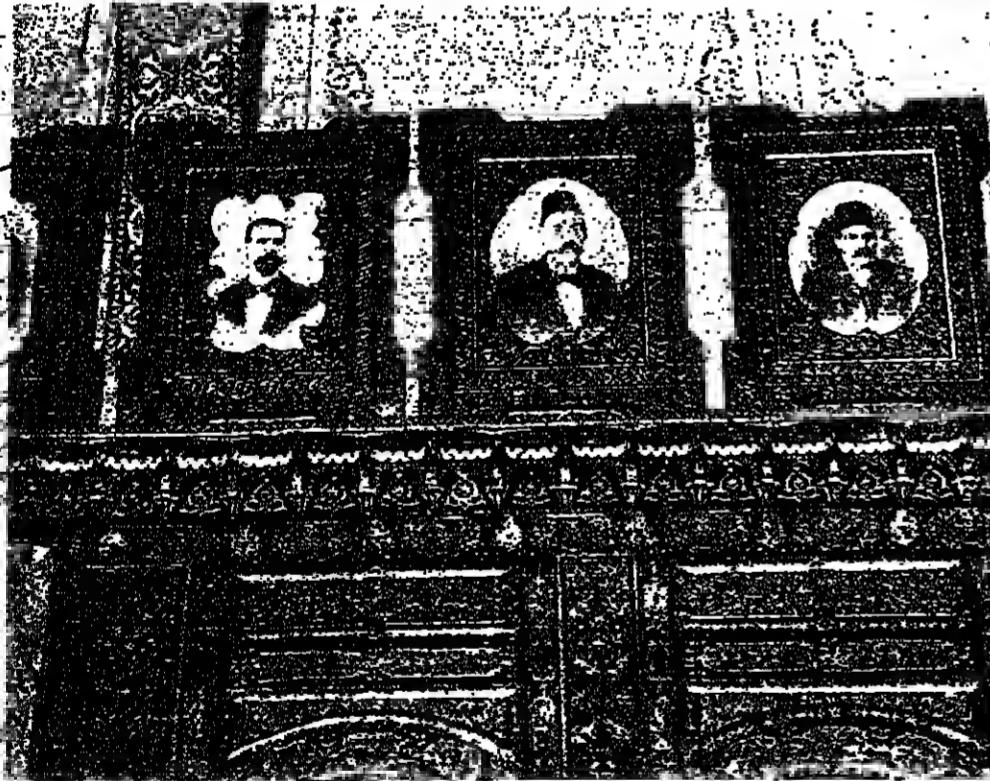
Damask: 'Endangered species'?



Amari, devoted five years to touching up the intricate designs of plaster-of-paris, paste and paint.



Men man a 50-year-old hand loom at Beit Nassan, Syria's only extant factory of hand woven Damascene silk.



Photographs of each successive patriarch of the Nasman family—alternating from Selim to Selim—since 1866 dominate a salon flanking the diwan. The pictures of their wives are on the opposite wall. Three generations of the Nasman family live in the residence today.

IMAN STOCK EXCHANGE REPORT

OF COMPANY	Par Value	Volume Traded	Last Buying Offer	Last Selling Offer	Closing Price
Petroleum Co.	JD 5,000	1,299	6.700	6.750	6.700
Cement Factories	JD 10,000	2,088	—	14,000	13,850
Pharmaceutical Co.	JD 5,000	30,297	24,300	25,000	24,300
Bank	JD 1,000	8,667	1,160	1,170	1,160
Gulf Bank	JD 1,000	3,255	1,050	1,060	1,050
awa Development and Co.	JD 1,000	1,960	2,430	2,500	2,450
uminium Co.	JD 1,000	372	0,930	0,940	0,930
tion Insurance Co.	JD 1,000	100	—	—	1,000
Bank	JD 5,000	392	7,350	7,420	7,400
vestment Bank	JD 1,000	1,265	—	1,170	1,100
National Bank	JD 5,000	149	—	—	7,450
mmian Bank	JD 5,000	16,495	6,600	6,700	6,630
brewery Co.	JD 1,000	165	—	—	1,650
b International Hotels Co.	JD 1,000	140	—	0,700	0,700
pinning and Weaving Co.	JD 1,000	331	0,738	—	0,720

June traded, Saturday, April 2: JD 66,987

Number of shares traded: 17,904

Text by Pat McDonnell
Photos by Samir Twair

Special to the Jordan Times

DAMASCUS, April 2--Historical records, romantic poems and travelers' journals have over the centuries mentioned damask brocades, silks and satins. An indication that the name of the Syrian capital became synonymous with the finest fabrics in the world is that the most elegant wedding gift a Victorian bride could ask for was a damask table cloth.

Twentieth century technology has, however, endangered the future of this prized Damascus commodity.

That is not to say silk will no longer be manufactured in Damascus. Fabrics woven on electric looms—which more often than not are of synthetic silk threads—will continue to be produced in Syria. However, the only remaining factory in Syria which turns out hand-loomed pure silk is Beit Nassan located at Bab Sharqi, the eastern gate of the old city.

"Ten years ago 375 employees were working in our silk factory and mother-of-pearl and wood mosaic furniture shop," said a company spokesman. "Today we have a total of 62 employees." In 1969 the factory employed 28 men on 14 hand looms, today four men work at two looms. In five years, the Nassan family fully expects its silk producing days to be over.

"We no longer can find young men who are willing or patient enough to learn the art of working a hand loom," the spokesman said. "We pay the metre of silk produced, not by the hour. A man can weave up to three metres a day at the rate of 18 Syrian pounds per metre—which isn't a bad wage in Damascus."

"In the past, we produced over 30 designs, today we only use five designs. The most popular is the 'Love Bird' pattern which the Syrian Government commissioned us to create as a gift to Queen Elizabeth II on her coronation."

Pointing to one of the two hand-looms still in operation, the spokesman commented they are relatively new, being only 50 years old. Older looms had up to eight foot pedals resulting in the weaver operating the loom much like a pipe organ.

Beit Nassan is one of the musts on any tourist's itinerary for Damascus. The factory lies outside the walls of the old city, but the adjacent two-storey residence of the Nassan family is within the city walls and is therefore a cultural property that falls under the protection of the Syrian Department of Museums and Antiquities.

The house was already 115 years old when Selim Nassan purchased it in 1866. Eight generations have since lived in the house and managed the factory. The residence is a showplace which the family opens for special parties. Notables who have been entertained here include the Aga Khan and French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

Visitors entering through the factory can observe demonstrations of how the silk is woven.

"Not only do we use only pure natural silks, but we use only vegetable dyes so the silk can be hand laundered," the spokesman said. "Hand looms don't have the stress and tension that on high-powered electric looms calls for chemicals and glues to strengthen the threads to prevent them from breaking. Therefore, you can say the silk we're producing today is the same quality as it was 100 years ago."

The result can be seen in the wrinkle-free quality of the silk which even when twisted, knotted and pulled unfolds with a flick of the wrist—miraculously without a crease.

"There still are a few Kurdish

families in the Mohagarine area of Damascus who work on hand-looms," the spokesman said.

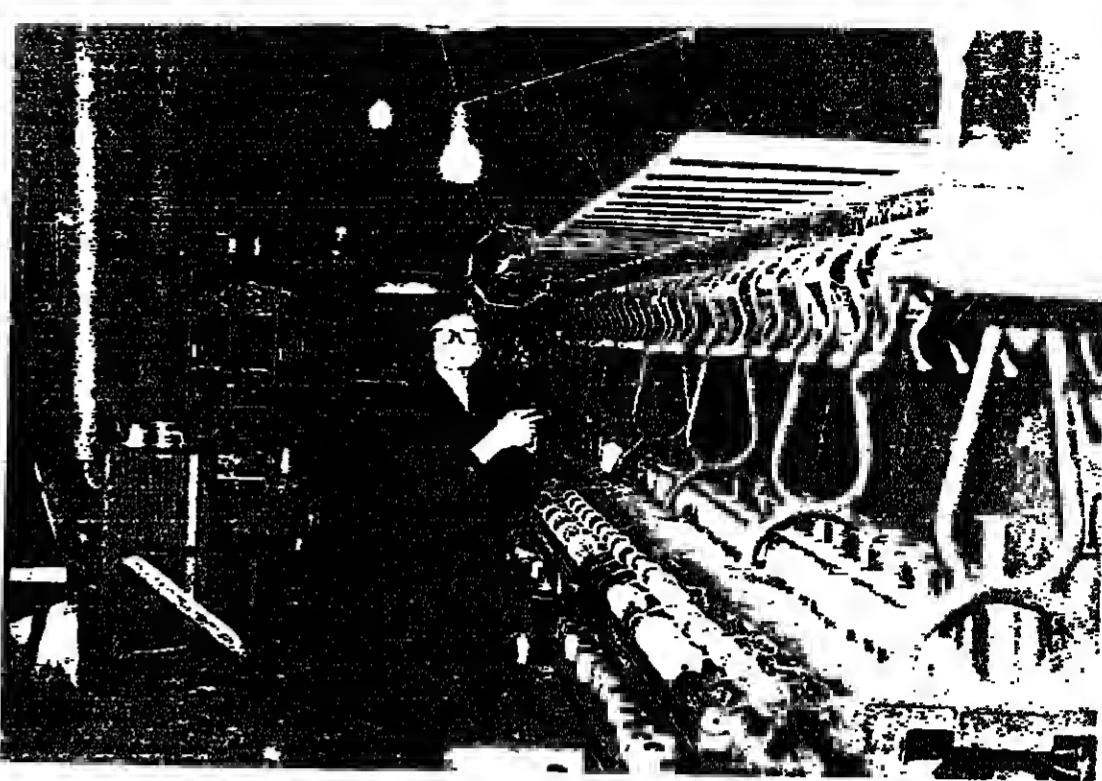
"This cottage industry was comprised of some 1,000 looms 15 years ago. Today there are about 30 such looms, but rayon and synthetic threads are used in combination with pure silk."

Beit Nassan does not claim to be the only factory still producing hand inlaid mother-of-pearl and wood mosaic furniture. Nonetheless, it probably is stocked with the largest collection of antique pieces of this type. Up to nine different varieties of wood, camel bone and mother-of-pearl are in the older pieces; whereas today's work is largely made of coloured plastic.

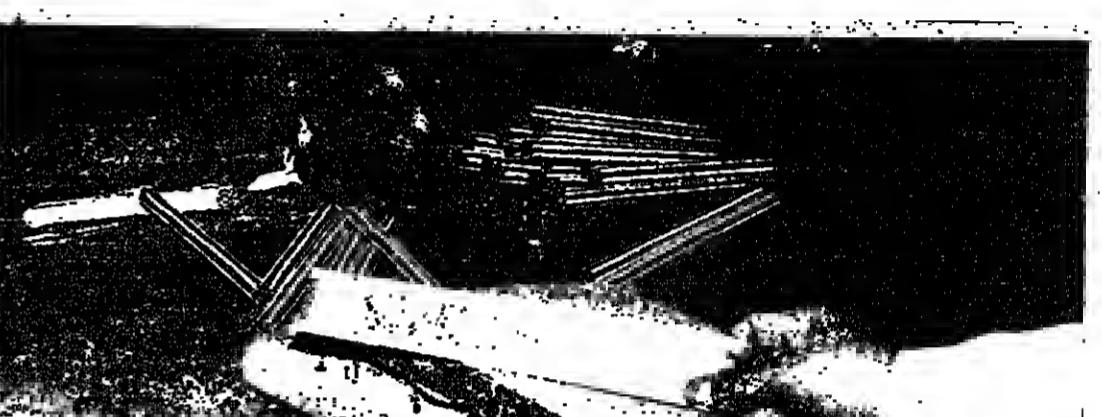
One antique table does everything but tapdance. It is, first of all, a stunning piece of furniture. When it is unfolded each successive layer of mosaic designs makes it suitable as a table for bridge, backgammon, chess or checkers. This particular game table, which sells for 3,800 Syrian pounds, contains lemon, rosewood, olive, beech, walnut, cedar and mother-of-pearl.

Many of the employees at Beit Nassan are regarded almost like members of the family. An example is Habsi Abu Daniel who has been manning the bobbin machines for 60 years. Another employee, Mohammad Nasmi, has been rolling silk threads for 50 years.

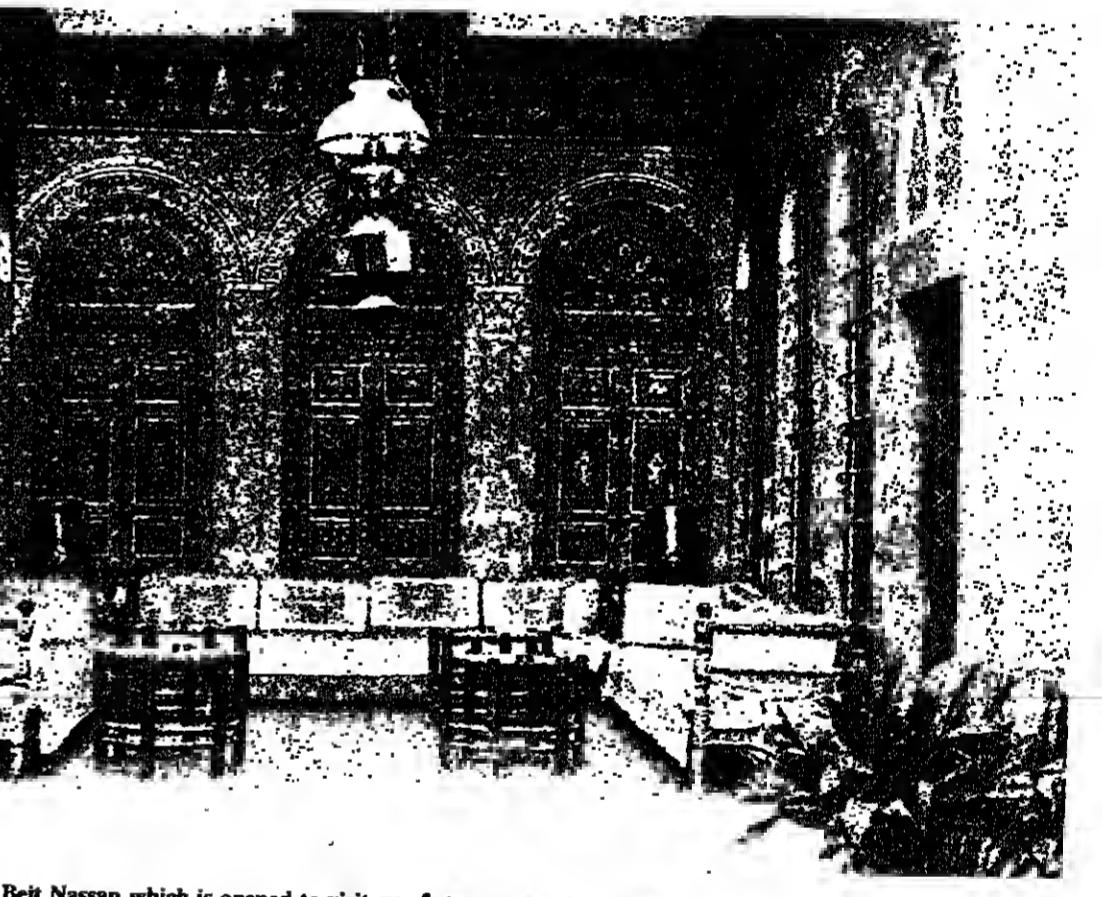
"The problem is their children didn't follow in their footsteps, they've become doctors, dentists and attorneys," said the spokesman, who, on this note, suggested that anyone who wants genuine Damascene silk had better visit Beit Nassan within the next five years.



For 60 years Habsi Abu Daniel has been watching over 70 bobbin machines in the silk factory of Beit Nassan.



Hand-inlaid mosaic wood furniture is assembled with individual sticks of wood (center foreground) which are glued together in one cylinder (right) and then shaved in strips (center foreground) for final application on the wood frame. Fifteen persons assemble about 80 tables in 18 months.



Diwan of Beit Nassan which is opened to visitors of state on special occasions.

First of a new generation



SKY SCANNER—Nearing completion atop Mount Hopkins in Arizona is the Multiple-Mirror Telescope, first of a new generation of giant optical instruments expected to add immensely to man's knowledge of the universe. The device uses a half dozen 1.8-metre mirrors, focused by an internal laser tracking system, to gather as much light from distant space as a traditional 4.5-metre telescope. In the United

States, only the 5-metre Mount Palomar telescope in California is larger. The six small mirrors are cast, ground and mounted at about one-fourth the cost of one big one. A joint project of the University of Arizona and the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Massachusetts, the new telescope is scheduled to be operational in early 1979. (ICA photo)

JORDAN TIMES SPORTS ROUNDUP

Rubstic wins Grand National

LIVERPOOL, England, April 2 (R) -- Rubstic -- Rubstic, who galloped on the beach all winter to escape the snow, stormed to a 25-1 victory in the Grand National at Aintree Saturday. But the world's most famous steeplechase was marred when two horses including Alerton, the favourite, were destroyed after falling. The huge crowd was unaware of Alerton's fate as they watched one of the most exciting finishes in the race's 140 year history. Five horses were almost level as they approached the final fence but jockey Maurice Barnes, in the "national" for the first time, drove Rubstic on to victory by a length and a half over 20-1 chance Zongadero, ridden by Bob Davies. Only seven of the 34 starters finished the four and a half miles (7,250 metre) race. Nine came down at the highest of the 20 fences on the course: "the shaft" when loose horses interfered with the runners.

Zambian wins boxing title

LUSAKA, April 2 (R) -- Lottie Mwale of Zambia won the Commonwealth light-heavyweight boxing title when he stopped boxer Gary Summerhays in the fifth round here Saturday.

American wins tennis tournament

MILAN, Italy, April 2 (R) -- American John McEnroe continued his success story yesterday by winning both the singles and doubles titles in the World Championship Tennis (WCT) indoor tournament here.

Yugoslavia downs Cyprus in cup match

KRUSEVAC, Yugoslavia, April 2 (R) -- Holders Yugoslavia beat Cyprus 1-0 in their European Football Union (UEFA) Under-21 cup match here yesterday. Yugoslavia were on top from the start but the Cyprus goalkeeper Kure, in particular, defended superbly. The only goal came in the 50th minute from Yugoslav captain Vojinovic who headed home from 12 metres after a corner by Smita. In a UEFA junior cup match in Porecavac, Yugoslavia, defeated Cyprus 1-0 in a replay for the final tournament. The goal came from Bajdarevic only one minute before the end.

Former Commonwealth boxing champion dies

MELBOURNE, Australia, April 2 (AP) -- Former Commonwealth boxing champion Johnny O'Brien was killed in a car accident here Friday, police said. Sunday O'Brien, 42, a Scot, had migrated to Australia about two years after he lost his Commonwealth title to the Australian champion, Johnny Farnham.

Boxers draw in junior Flyweight title bout

SEOUL, April 2 (AP) -- Kim Sung-Jeon of South Korea retained the World Boxing Council junior flyweight title Saturday with a

draw against Dominican challenger Hector Ray Melendez in a 15-round match at Moonhwa Gymnasium. At the end of the 9th, some 4,000 partisan fans booed the hometown champion, apparently disappointed over his unimpressive performance. In the 10th round, Kim, with his right eyebrow slightly swollen, came out aggressively, charging the challenger over the ropes a couple of times to the cheers of the crowd. A few explosive counterblows by the champion visibly slowed down Melendez' offensive, and Kim appeared to have earned points in the 10th and 11th rounds. In the last three rounds, both fighters seemed exhausted, but the Korean seemed to have a slight edge over the challenger with his combination blows to the body.

NBA basketball standings

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Washington	52	25	.675	—
Philadelphia	45	34	.570	8
New Jersey	36	41	.468	16
New York	31	49	.388	22
Boston	26	49	.364	24

Central Division

San Antonio	45	33	.577	—
Houston	43	34	.558	12
Atlanta	43	36	.544	21
Cleveland	30	48	.385	15
Detroit	29	49	.372	19
New Orleans	25	54	.316	29

Western Conference

Midwest Division

Kansas City	45	34	.570	—
Denver	44	34	.564	11
Milwaukee	37	42	.466	8
Indiana	36	43	.456	9
Chicago	29	50	.367	16

Pacific Division

Seattle	50	28	.641	—
Phoenix	48	30	.615	2
Los Angeles	44	33	.571	5
Portland	44	34	.564	6
San Diego	42	37	.532	8
Golden State	35	44	.443	15

Clinched division, Sunday's games:

San Antonio 112, Boston 110; Philadelphia 112, Los Angeles 111; Washington 105, Denver 89; Cleveland 114, Houston 105; Portland 109, Milwaukee 107; Phoenix 116, Detroit 105; San Diego 126, New York 116; Seattle 102, Golden State 97; Atlanta 109, New Jersey 98.

London research helps find cause of rare disease

LONDON -- Doctors in London have helped to pin down the cause of the muscular weakening disease myasthenia gravis. Their work is leading to new methods of treating the disease, and to a new understanding of other diseases which, like myasthenia gravis, are caused by an autoimmune reaction -- by the body's immune system mistakenly reacting against some part of itself as though it were foreign tissue.

Myasthenia gravis is a relatively rare disease, existing outside the Western World where it can affect up to one in 10,000 of the population. The symptoms are fatigue and exhaustion after little physical effort.

Some years ago doctors discovered that blood serum taken from myasthenia gravis patients contains antibodies to the receptor sites on muscles which respond to signals from nerves. They also found that myasthenia patients have fewer of these receptor sites.

Antibodies are the protein compounds normally formed by white blood cells to neutralise foreign organisms or toxins entering the body. Muscle receptor sites respond to a chemical stimulus -- that of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine -- which is released from branching nerve endings embedded in the muscle end. The acetylcholine molecules fit into the receptor sites like keys into locks. They provide a very specific stimulus which makes the muscle contract in accordance with instructions sent ultimately from the brain.

For some reason -- still unknown -- it appears that myasthenia gravis patients form antibodies to the specific structures of their receptor sites as though these were foreign proteins.

Researchers went on to prove that these antibodies are the cause of the disease. They did

this by injecting serum from myasthenia gravis patients into mice, which promptly developed symptoms of the disease.

The next step was to see whether the antibodies were affecting the release of acetylcholine from the nerve endings, or its reception in the receptor sites. Doctors formed the theory that antibodies, by reacting with the receptor sites, might be blocking them. This would mean that even if acetylcholine was being released in normal quantities, much of it would be unable to stimulate the muscle to contract and acetylcholine molecules would be unable to enter blocked receptor sites. The reduced stimulus this would cause would account for the muscular weakness and fatigue characteristic of the disease.

This theory has now received further support by research workers at University College and the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases in London. They have demonstrated that acetylcholine is released normally in myasthenia gravis patients but the numbers of receptors able to receive it is reduced -- thus confirming earlier work by American researchers.

The researchers actually measured the reduction in numbers of unblocked receptor sites. They took a sample of muscle tissue from a patient and treated it with a snake venom. The venom was alpha bungarotoxin, a poison which kills because the venom molecules, like antibodies, fit into the muscle receptor sites and prevent any stimulus being received, thus paralysing and killing the victim.

The molecules of alpha bungarotoxin -- tagged with radioactivity so that their movements could be followed -- found far fewer receptor sites to fit into than normal in muscle



The National Hospital for Nervous Diseases in London where research is taking place into the causes of myasthenia gravis. (LPS photo)

from a myasthenia gravis patient.

The London researchers went on to show that acetylcholine had a much less stimulating effect on muscle from a myasthenia gravis patient than on a normal person. Samples of healthy human muscle showed the same lessening of response when treated with serum from myasthenia gravis patients.

Put together with earlier work, these different strands of evidence amount to proof that it is the release of autoimmune antibodies and their blocking of receptor sites which causes the symptoms of myasthenia gravis.

That is not the end of the story. Unfortunately, it seems likely that the antibodies not only remain for a while in the receptor sites -- they actively damage and destroy them. But treatments exist, and the new knowledge, and more research

based on it should lead to improvements.

One technique is to give patient drugs which prevent breakdown of acetylcholine. This means blockage of receptor sites is partially compensated by increased levels of the neurotransmitter to stimulate receptor sites which are still available. Another approach is to give drugs which suppress the activity of the immune system, including production of immune antibodies. The disadvantage is the resistance to infection.

A third treatment, which gives some very good results, consists of exchanging much as possible a patient's blood plasma for fresh plasma containing antibodies. After four such plasma exchanges of the harmful antibody have been removed.

(London Press Service)

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